

Tape 5

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There are differing views on what circumstances would prompt the Soviets to employ their ground forces outside the Soviet Bloc. The Director of Central Intelligence believes that ^{growing} ~~going~~ Soviet self-confidence in projecting power and in their role as a global power will diminish whatever reluctance may have existed in the past. In fact, it may have been less reluctance and more lack of capability in the past that has inhibited such employment. At the same time, there are limited situations in which surrogate forces would not be preferable from a Soviet point of view. Afghanistan, however, is one where the provision of limited Soviet ground forces in a hurry might well be undertaken. Another view believes that the Soviets would employ ground combat units only where they consider such action essential to preserve their vital interest in the region and even then they would attempt to limit their involvement to a defensive. Still another view holds that, if unforeseen circumstances should cause the Soviet oil situation to become desperate, Moscow would use force, including ground forces if necessary, to ensure access to this and other strategic resources.